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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000578

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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (03/31): PALESTINIANS REMIND ARAB
LEADERS TO PRIORITIZE PUBLIC GOOD

Main Stories:

The three dailies lead with reports on the Doha Arab Summit, noting that Arab leaders condemned recent Israeli measures [house

demolitions] imposed on Jerusalemites. According to reporting, Arab leaders called on Israel to pursue peace with the Palestinians without delay. Palestinian Authority President Abbas urged Arab leaders to exert pressure on Israel to respect signed agreements and urge the Middle East Quartet to insist that Israel respect its obligations and commitment to the peace process. Palestinian Authority President Abbas acknowledged Egyptian support for Palestinian national dialogue in Cairo and reiterated his belief that a national consensus government, able to communicate with the regional and international community, is essential.

Al Quds front pages an AFP report quoting an Israeli Likud official announcing that members of the new government will be sworn in on March 31. Al-Hayyat Al-Jadida cites a wire report about Israeli Premier-designate Netanyahu's expressed goal of achieving "real" peace with Palestinians, in support of both Palestinian and Israeli interests. Netanyahu also reiterated his willingness to pursue negotiations with Palestinian Authority President Abbas in an attempt to achieve economic peace. However, reporting notes, Netanyahu stated that the establishment of a Palestinian State is not being considered.

All three dailies report on Palestinian National Land Day celebrations on March 30. The celebrations included visits to protest tents in Jerusalem as part of the Arab League-sponsored "Jerusalem, Capital of Arab Culture 2009" festival. Reporting notes that trees and plants were also distributed in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem areas.

The three dailies report that Israel is closing its investigation into recent allegations that Israeli soldiers targeted Palestinian civilians during the recent conflict in Gza. The investigation concluded that the allegations are not supported by the evidence.

Al-Quds cites a Wafa report about Palestinian officials welcoming remarks by European officials calling on the incoming Israeli Government to recognize the need for establishing a Palestinian state. According to the report, also featured on Al-Hayyat Al-Jdida's front page, the EU may reconsider current relations with Israel if settlement activities continue and the two state solution is not accepted by Israel.

Al-Quds cites a DPA report quoting Palestinian Authority (PA) Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Ajrami stating that PA Premier Fayyad will remain in office until a national consensus government is formed. Al-Ayyam cites a wire report quoting PA Minister of Planning Abdallah stating that PA President Abbas has sole constitutional authority to decide on the handling of forming a future government.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Hani Al-Masri opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "Doha summit faces big challenge in second Netanyahu Government" (03/31): "Israel must understand that it cannot combine the continuation of settlement activities, siege, aggression... with the so-called peace process... a united Arab position [must be developed] to show Israel concretely that Arabs have other alternatives [than dealing with Israel on Israel's terms.]

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2) Al-Quds independent daily runs an editorial entitled, "Arab Summit and Land Day" (03/31): "On Land Day, we tell Arab Leaders meeting in Doha that Palestine is a pure, Arab land, a land that has witnessed the rise of all religions and civilizations. It faces many challenges that are more important than your artificial conflicts and personal interests. This reminder also goes for those who insist on deepening Palestinian division. To them we say, pay more attention to the internal conflicts and take serious action. [Your response to these conflicts] is the only criterion we will employ when judging the outcomes of any summit."

WALLES